



Montana Nurses Association

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EXHIBIT 5
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HB 267

Celebrating 100 Years in 2012!

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is Don Judge and I'm appearing here today on behalf of the Montana Nurses' Association in support of House Bill 267. The testimony I'm presenting is on behalf of Barbara Swehla who currently serves as Interim Executive Director of the Montana Nurses' Association.

The Montana Nurses Association supports effort to address our childhood obesity challenges. We think that a measured approach in terms of policy and regulation with general statutory authority would help the efforts succeed in Montana. And if successful these efforts can develop in children good habits that will keep them healthy even into adulthood.

One of the findings in a report from Delaware, a leader in addressing this issue, is that childcare providers need support and technical assistance when implementing such guidelines. This is clearly a role that child care health consultants could potentially fulfill. The report and information about it (including a link to it) is included below.

A new study just published by the nonprofit health research organization, Altarum Institute, suggests that Delaware's first-in-the-nation guidelines for nutrition and physical activity in childcare settings are broadly accepted by both childcare providers and parents, but that challenges remain which should be addressed to implement the new policies fully and effectively. This research, based on focus groups with parents and providers from 62 child care centers and homes across the state, provides a set of recommendations for meeting some key challenges

The study was conducted by Altarum as a part of its Childhood Obesity Prevention Mission Project, in partnership with Nemours Health and Prevention Services and Delaware's Child and Adult Food Care Program and Office on Child Care Licensing.

The report and executive summary can be downloaded from: <http://www.altarum.org/publications-resources-health-systems-research/CHOMP-Delaware-Focus-Group-Report>. This link will let you open either the full report or the Executive Summary.

Basic Information from the Report found that:

Delaware's policies on Nutrition and physical activity in child care are some of the most comprehensive in the nation.

Focus groups consisting of both child care staff and parents were convened and identified both challenges and strategies to compliance with Delaware regulations on Nutrition and Physical Activity in Child Care.

Basically, child care staff recommended expanding the reach of past training on these topics and linking staff training to continuing education and the state Quality Rating System.

Parent focus groups recommended direct communication from the state to parents about these issues and the requirements being implemented in child care programs and suggested that the state identify materials to be

distributed to parents about their children's nutrition and physical activity needs and how these were going to be addressed in child care programs.

There were 7 recommendations generated by these groups that are listed on p. 55 of the full report and discussed in the text following. Of those 7 recommendations, I would list the following as requiring the most effort and response from state programs:

- * Offer support to help providers address the challenges of meal planning, food preparation and food purchasing.
- * Help providers implement strategies to successfully engage staff and parents.
- * Expand and improve training and technical assistance for child care directors and staff.
- * Align state child care Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) with enhanced nutrition and physical activity standards.

Montana has a QRIS Initiative still in the Field Test stage. It is called STARS.

We believe it is in the best interest of Montana's children to implement guidelines and policies related to Nutrition and Physical Activity in child care and develop regulations to guide and enforce the policies and practices. This process should be undertaken with knowledge of the challenges and recommendations of other states that have implemented such guidelines and with appreciation for the possible challenges to this effort in our rural state.

Respectfully submitted,

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